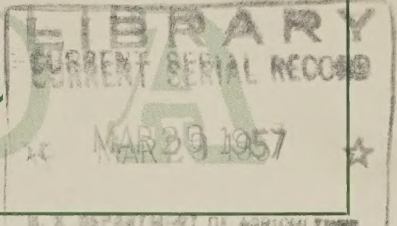


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Newsletter



ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES OF THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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A Word of Apology: We apologize for the lapse between newsletters. We wanted to give you the latest information on prospective legislation and on the Council activities. The next issue will be in January, and we will try to have one monthly while Congress is in session.

: ANNOUNCEMENT: You have just received or will receive in a day or two our "package :
 : deal" containing a ballot for election of Council members, a questionnaire on choice of :
 : interests for OPEDA's undertaking; a return envelope and a notice of membership dues for :
 : 1957 or 1957-58. If you are paid through '57, your notice will be stamped PAID. Retain it :
 : as your receipt. You will not receive a membership card. If you are paid only through :
 : 1956, please send your check for \$3 for 1957 or \$5 for 1957-58 and sign and retain the :
 : enclosed membership card. This procedure has resulted in considerable saving in time :
 : and postage.

LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK - by Dillard B. Lasseter, Executive Officer

We are glad to report that OPEDA's close friends on the key committees in Congress have all returned to office and our relationships with the next Congress will be even friendlier than usual. This applies to both sides of the aisle, as OPEDA can sincerely claim many devoted friends in both parties.

Principal item of interest in the forthcoming Congress will be an all-important pay raise. OPEDA's function on this item is to work toward an equitable increase all along the line rather than a flat lump sum. In the past, we have been influential in securing partially equitable treatment for the higher grades but these grades have not yet been granted proportionate increases based on the cost of living indices.

There will undoubtedly be a better health and hospital insurance plan introduced and the odds are that a fairly good law will be enacted.

A Federal-State Retirement bill will be introduced, and intense efforts will be made to change the Administration's stand on this item. We don't anticipate any difficulty in getting it through Congress.

Legislation permitting detail to educational institutions for training will probably have more chance of enactment than in the last Congress.

On a broader front, there will be concerted efforts to change the present agricultural price support system. OPEDA of course will not take any stand on this, but we know our membership is naturally interested in it.

Details on all the anticipated legislation named above will be given in January after Congress convenes.

And now, we have a confession to make! Some of our members in Washington have accused the OPEDA leadership of being too modest in taking credit for accomplishments in the legislative field. In the future we will report more fully to our members when our efforts have been rewarded and take a bow.

OPEDA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE UNDERWAY

The Membership Committee, headed by Hugh Brown (SCS), is off to a good start. At a recent meeting of the committee and agency membership drive representatives, the accompanying photo was made. Also in the picture are C.E. Burkhead, president, Mr. Lasseter and Mrs. Sliney of the OPEDA staff. The Committee's two main objectives are: to give all USDA employees who are eligible (GS-5 and above) an opportunity to join OPEDA; and to increase membership to



(over)

8,000. Promotional material being used includes a letter of personal invitation from President C.E. Burkhead, with an application for membership attached. Copies of the letter are available from the OPEDA Office for any members who wish to give or send them to co-workers. The drive for new members started October 1, as after that date all memberships carry through the next year. In the 6-weeks period since then, 241 new members have been added, with the largest group of 150 from SCS -- thanks to R.W. Rogers et al from that agency. Runner up is ARS with 45 new members, signed up by Frances Debnam. Also getting results are Harry Ratcliffe (FCS), Dennett Guthrie (FAS), and Bill Harris and Wilson Tucker of CSS. A box score of membership will be given in January.

MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE GIVES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WIDER PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS

At the final meeting of the 1955-56 OPEDA Council on October 29, a report was given by Harry Norcross (AMS), chairman of a Committee appointed by former president Chris Henderson "to study...and make recommendations which would provide members with the most practical and economical means of having a direct voice in governing OPEDA."

The Committee, which included Alice Campbell (AMS), H.A. Edd (FS), James E. Lee (FHA), Earl C. McCracken (ARS), T.A. Neubauer (SCS), John Sutton (SCS), and Carl Wehrwein (FAS), after an extensive study, came up with these recommendations:

Closer contact between members and the governing bodies of OPEDA -- by means of (1) local programs to acquaint members with their Council representatives and the Organization and to enable members to express their views; (2) equal representation on the Council of all classes and grades of members; (3) providing each member with information about the principal features of the Organization; (4) more frequent newsletters; and (5) polling all members on matters of major importance.

Election of all officers except the executive officer by the members. (Note: Officers are now elected by the Council, which is elected by all members). Also, four vice-presidents instead of one -- one to be an executive vice-president, the other three to chair the Public Service, Professional, and Economic Committees.

Organization of local chapters to provide proper representation to members outside the Washington area.

Consideration given to stimulating formation of OPEDA-type organizations in other Departments; looking toward a Federation for a more effective solution of common problems.

A varied program covering as many as possible of the problems affecting employee welfare.

Coordination of efforts with those of other organizations such as the Employee Council.

Encouragement of USDA Clubs.

A larger number of committees to do the spadework involved in administering the affairs of OPEDA.

The Council went on record as favoring the recommendations but deferred formal action until the new Council meets in January. Harry Norcross and his committee were commended. In line with the general agreement of a need for wider participation, the Council approved the questionnaire (which has been mailed out with the ballots) for obtaining members' views on proposed undertakings for OPEDA.

We should be glad to hear from any of our members -- especially in the field -- on your reactions to the proposals in the Participation Committee Report. If you wish, you may use space on the Program Inquiry questionnaire and send it along with your ballot.

NOTES FROM THE LUNCHEONS

September -- Both groups, Washington and Beltsville, heard Joseph A. Becker, Director of Statistics for FAS give his "reflections on world agriculture." Mr. Becker, a long-time OPEDA member, was secretary-treasurer of the Organization during its early years.

October -- The Washington forum had as its speaker Frederick C. Belen, chief counsel for the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, and the Beltsville group heard O. Glenn Stahl of the Civil Service Commission and author of "Public Personnel Administration--4th ed." tell what is being done to relieve the shortage of scientists and engineers.

November -- Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday, only one luncheon was held, with Beltsville members invited in to Washington to hear Jose Vergara, agricultural attache from the Spanish Embassy. The luncheon forums are growing in popularity and, we regret to say, some of our members are turned away. Any suggestions for larger accommodations would be welcome.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

In the August Newsletter we began a list of our 10-year members, being very proud of the record, and promised to continue the list in the next Newsletter. If you will forgive us, we would like to renege, as the list is so long it would take an entire 2-page newsletter!

HERE AND THERE

Retired: Strother B. "Pop" Herrell, Assistant Director of Personnel, after 40 years of Government Service. Also George C. Edler, head of Seed Section, Field Crop Statistics Branch of AMS. Both were honored at retirement parties on October 31....Returned from extended vacation in Europe: our secretary-treasurer Dorothy Martin. Increased OPEDA Membership: T.G. Amason (SCS), Ozark, Ala. sent in 23, claiming 100% eligibles signed up!